

## **Introduction**

In March 2020, 18,000 citizens of Dresden were selected at random from the local register and asked to participate in the 13th Municipal Citizen Survey on a diversity of topics relating to life in the city. More than 6,000 of those contacted actually responded. It was also possible to complete the questionnaires online, and a third of the respondents made use of this option. Overall, the survey achieved a response rate of 34.5 per cent. The City of Dresden thanks all those who responded for their participation.

The following thematic complexes were addressed by the latest Municipal Citizen Survey: Housing, characterisation of the city, quality of life, voluntary work, care, local government, health and life situation, environment, traffic and security.

In the following, you will find a few brief summaries of the results in selected thematic areas.

### **The people of Dresden describe their city as tradition-conscious, green and hospitable**

The descriptive attribute which received the highest level of endorsement among the population of Dresden was tradition-conscious (average grading 1.9). This score has remained constantly high since 2010. There is furthermore widespread agreement that the city is green (2.1) and hospitable (2.2). The attributes modern and cosmopolitan received less endorsement. Characterisation of the city as cosmopolitan, in particular, was evidently suppressed due to the Pegida movement, but has been increasing once more since 2016. Ostensibly improving endorsement was also determined for the characterisation of Dresden as a child-friendly city. The statement that Dresden possesses an attractive city centre was similarly received with very broad agreement.

Around three-quarters of the respondents in each case said that more should be done for children, young people and citizens with disabilities. There was also extensive support for increased commitment to the concerns of families, senior citizens and the homeless. Thirty per cent expressed the opinion that less or significantly less should be done for asylum-seekers and refugees.

### **Large apartments remain the trend**

The trend towards ever larger apartments, which has been observed ever since the first citizen survey in 1993, remains apparent. In 2020, the average residential apartment in Dresden measures 74 m<sup>2</sup> (including the kitchen, bathrooms and hallway, and counting half the area for a balcony/patio), compared to just 70 m<sup>2</sup> in 2010. Most apartments have three rooms larger than six square metres (35 per cent), followed closely by two such rooms (34 per cent). The proportion of one-room apartments is eight per cent, while 23 per cent of all apartments comprise more than four rooms.

In Dresden, 17 per cent of all households live in "their own four walls". The proportion of home ownership has thus remained essentially constant over the past years. Households with a net income of more than €4,000 are noticeably less likely to live in rented accommodation (61 per cent). The majority of tenant households live in apartments rented from private owners (59 per cent), with around 15 per cent renting from the housing enterprise Vonovia and 25 per cent from housing cooperatives. A further relevant indicator is the vacancy rate, which in Dresden amounts to 1.7 per cent (in occupied residential properties) according to the survey replies.

### **Residential mobility and intentions to move**

One-third of the survey respondents were born in Dresden. In comparison, 40 per cent of all residents moved to Dresden in 2001 or later. The large number of students in the city contributes to this figure. Seventy-six per cent of all respondents have moved into a (new) home in Dresden within the past 20 years. Residential mobility is especially high in the city districts Outer and Inner Neustadt, as well as in Cotta, Löbtau, Naußlitz and Dölzsch.

At present, 63 per cent of all households have no intention to move. Among those with plans to move, most would like to remain in their current area of the city (30 per cent), while a quarter intend to move to another part of Dresden. This means that over half of those citizens who wish to move intend to remain in Dresden, with a further 13 per cent seeking a new home in the immediate surroundings. The main reasons given for a move into the immediate surroundings are high rent, environmental pollution and the wish to live closer to

nature. By contrast, employment, education and family reasons play a key role in decisions to move to more distant destinations.

### **Residential satisfaction higher than ever despite increasing rents**

The citizens of Dresden are more satisfied than ever before with their accommodation, residential buildings and residential environment. The average satisfaction with accommodation and residential environment – measured on a scale from 1 (very satisfied) to 5 (very dissatisfied) – reached 1.8 for the first time in both categories, while the satisfaction with residential buildings averaged 2.0. Satisfaction with the city in general (1.9) failed to reach a new high, but has nevertheless improved compared to 2018 (2.0).

These positive results were achieved despite increasing rents in the city. For the first time since the start of data collection, the average rental apartment in Dresden cost more than 9 Euros per square metre (€9.16). Of this amount, the base rent excluding utilities accounted for €6.76, which represents an increase of 5.1 per cent compared to 2018. The greatest increases since 2018 were reported in the city districts Gorbitz (9.8 per cent) and Outer and Inner Neustadt (8.9 per cent). The latter is also the district with the highest average monthly base rent at €7.37 per square metre. The city-wide housing cost burden, i.e. the proportion of household income which must be spent on rent, is unchanged since 2018 at 28 per cent (2016: 27 per cent).

### **Especially high satisfaction with public transport and shopping opportunities**

The survey section addressing the relative importance of selected factors for the perceived quality of life indicated that a green environment, public security, local health care services and access to public transport share first place. Public transport access also achieved the highest score in terms of satisfaction (1.7), followed by shopping opportunities in the vicinity of home (1.8). Dresden's citizens were least satisfied with the swimming baths (3.0), children's and youth centres (3.0) and availability of affordable housing (3.2) in their city district.

As was the case in 2018, there is particular discrepancy between the importance attached to the availability of affordable housing and the level of satisfaction. Another area with considerable deviation between importance and satisfaction is public security. On the other hand, there is close correlation between expectations (importance) and reality (satisfaction) with regard to family centres and schools. The latter is also significantly less important to the citizens of Dresden than in 2018; the same applies to children's and youth centres, swimming baths and sports facilities.

### **Traffic, housing and right-wing extremism are seen as the most pressing problems in Dresden**

Within the framework of the Municipal Citizen Survey, the respondents were given the opportunity to name the most pressing problems to be tackled by the City of Dresden in their own words. As has always been the case, diverse issues related to traffic were also mentioned most frequently in 2020 (29 per cent). They were followed by problems associated with housing and right-wing extremism in society, with 12 per cent each. Further smaller percentages were recorded for the coronavirus pandemic and its consequences, the complex of child care, schools and education, urban development and construction, and environmental issues. The conditions for cyclists were shown to be particularly relevant among the traffic problems, while rents and property prices were prominent in connection with housing.

Compared to previous surveys, the concern for traffic issues has again increased significantly and this is now clearly the dominant topic. The relevance of right-wing extremism has declined slightly compared to 2018, and less importance is also attached to housing problems. Two areas in which significantly fewer problems are perceived are urban development and construction (the second most frequent topic in 2014 with 13 per cent) and local government policies on foreigners and refugees (still third most frequent topic in 2016 with 12 per cent, but now of lesser importance with three per cent).

### **Full results for reference**

The results of the Municipal Citizen Survey are published in two brochures:

The brochure "Tabellenteil" (Tables) presents the statistical analyses of all survey questions according to selected socio-demographic factors and by city district.

The brochure “Hauptaussagen” (Main Statements) interprets and presents the results in texts and diagrams, compares them with the results of previous surveys and identifies trends.

Both brochures, and similarly those relating to previous Municipal Citizen Surveys, are available for download. Alternatively, printed copies can be ordered for a small fee from the Municipal Statistics Office.